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TAGS: [ECON](#) [ID](#) [PREL](#) [XC](#) [APEC](#)
SUBJECT: US-ASEAN 7: SUPPORTING A MEETING AT APEC

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Mission recommends a presidential meeting with the seven ASEAN leaders present on the margins of the November 22-23 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in Lima. Indonesian officials and the ASEAN Secretariat propose using such a meeting to discuss the global financial crisis, disaster relief, energy, food security and trade. The ASEAN Secretariat is also prepared to brief on the Cyclone Nargis relief effort and the way ahead after ratification of the ASEAN Charter. A joint briefing by President Bush and President Yudhoyono on the G-20 Summit would also highlight Indonesia's importance in our partnership with the region. A meeting would also signal Washington's continued commitment to Southeast Asia, especially in light of the global financial situation. END SUMMARY.

INDONESIAN SUPPORT

12. (C) Officials at the Department of Foreign Affairs (DEPLU) support holding an ASEAN 7 meeting with the President on the margins of the upcoming APEC Summit in Peru. Ibnu Hadi, Director for Intra-Regional Cooperation at DEPLU, said Indonesia wanted to discuss the global financial situation, energy, food security and disaster relief. Hadi cautioned against discussion of new U.S.-ASEAN issues since the ASEAN 7 did not represent ASEAN as an entity.

ASEAN SUPPORT

13. (C) ASEAN Secretariat officials likewise urged U.S.-ASEAN 7 dialogue at the APEC Summit. Principal Director for External Relations Dhannanjaya V. Sunoto said the Secretariat was interested in discussing the international response to the global financial crisis as well as cooperation in disaster management and trade relations. ASEAN Secretary General Surin Pitsuwan was prepared to report on lessons learned from the Cyclone Nargis experience in Burma. Surin could also discuss priorities and the future direction of ASEAN in light of the recently completed ratification of the ASEAN Charter by all member states. If Washington welcomed

such briefings, Dhannanjaya suggested, Washington should formally request Surin's participation in the meeting.

MISSION'S RECOMMENDATION

¶4. (C) A discussion of these issues at this time would be useful both for the practical aspects involved and to signal Washington's commitment to maintaining robust ties with Southeast Asia. Energy and food security are issues of considerable concern to Indonesia, as Foreign Minister Wirajuda's extensive discussion of the topic in his recent UN General Assembly speech made clear. The discussions and proposed ASEAN Secretariat briefings could help inform the transition papers that Washington is preparing for the next administration.

¶5. (C) Indonesia is ASEAN's largest nation and is set to remain a pivotal partner in our strategic partnership with Southeast Asia, from disaster relief to China's influence to Burma's role in the region. Given that Indonesia will be the only ASEAN member state represented at the planned G-20 talks in Washington on November 15, a joint briefing to ASEAN leaders in Lima by President Bush and President Yudhoyono on the Washington Summit would reinforce that message.

HUME